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Report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security

I. Introduction

1. Over the past 17 years, the women and peace and security agenda has become an essential component of global affairs and a tool necessary for strengthening the effectiveness of United Nations efforts in conflict prevention and resolution and humanitarian action. It is a prerequisite for the fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Across the three pillars of the United Nations — security, human rights and development — the women and peace and security agenda contributes to transformative change. The past two decades have produced sufficient, credible evidence that women's meaningful participation measurably strengthens protection efforts, accelerates economic recovery, deepens peacebuilding efforts and leads to more sustainable peace. Growing research in recent years also points to the direct relationship between gender equality on the one hand and resilience to and prevention of conflict on the other. Despite the evidence supporting the transformative power of this agenda, the clear and detailed road map provided through the recommendations of the 2015 global study on women, peace and security, the 2015 peace and security reviews[1] and the increased need for an effective solution to growing global challenges, the actual implementation of the women and peace and security agenda continues to fall short.

2. The present report is submitted pursuant to the presidential statement dated 26 October 2010 (S/PRST/2010/22), in which the Security Council requested annual reports on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), resolution 2122 (2013), in which the Council called for updates on progress made across all areas of the women and peace and security agenda, highlighting gaps and challenges. It includes updates on the status of implementation of the resolution since the issuance of the previous report (S/2016/822), reflecting indicator data[2] and highlighting trends. It also provides an update on progress made pursuant to resolution 2242 (2015), which was adopted following the conduct of three peace and security reviews in 2015, with a focus on how the effective implementation of the women and peace and security agenda directly contributes to preventing conflict and sustaining peace. It

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[1] S/2016/673, S/2015/446, S/2015/490, and Radhika Coomaraswamy, *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325* (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), 2015).

[2] For the indicators, see S/2010/498, annex.

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offers a set of core, overarching and catalytic recommendations that speak to the most fundamental challenges.

3. The report is based on data and analysis provided by entities of the United Nations system, including peace operations and country teams, and inputs from Member States, regional organizations and civil society.

II. Overview of progress

4. In the previous report (S/2016/822), all stakeholders were called upon to recommit to action across five key areas: (a) bringing women's participation and leadership to the core of peace and security efforts; (b) protecting the human rights of women and girls during and after conflict; (c) ensuring gender-responsive planning and accountability for results; (d) strengthening gender architecture and technical expertise; and (e) financing the women and peace and security agenda. Each of these areas remains a priority today, and progress on each is discussed herein.

5. I am heartened by the level of reflection within the international community since 2015 on what preventing conflict and sustaining peace mean in practice and by efforts to bring inclusivity, equality and human rights to the centre of those discussions. However, our actions — especially in today's changing world — remain inadequate. The twin resolutions on sustaining peace (Security Council resolution 2282 (2016) and General Assembly resolution 70/262) underscore the importance of women's leadership and meaningful participation in the prevention and resolution of conflict and peacebuilding, recognize the need to increase the representation of women at all levels of decision-making and call for strengthened partnerships with civil society, including women's organizations and women's peace activists. To be effective, however, preventive measures need to move beyond addressing the imminence of crisis and must tackle the structural and root causes of crisis, including inequality.

6. Commitments become meaningful accomplishments, changing lives and transforming societies, only upon implementation. Efforts for peace and security, sustainable development and human rights therefore must be linked not only in words but in practice. Women peacebuilders have long carried the message of conflict prevention, calling for an end to war and acting as informal mediators and first responders. Nearly two decades ago, the movement for a stronger global focus on conflict prevention and inclusive decision-making in the context of complex global challenges of peace and security became the force behind the women and peace and security agenda. Today, evidence continues to show the foresight of this agenda, demonstrating that the sustainability of peace depends directly on the consistency of women's engagement in peace processes, politics, governance, institution-building, the rule of law, the security sector and economic recovery, and that the levels of gender equality and the security of women are among the most reliable indicators of peace.

7. Since taking office, I have pursued a transformative organizational shift towards a coordinated, robust and holistic approach to conflict prevention, rooted in gender equality, through the ongoing reform of the Organization's peace and security architecture and development and management systems along with efforts to increase gender parity and address sexual exploitation and abuse. Crucial strategies for integrating and bolstering gender equality in the conflict prevention work of the United Nations include guaranteeing women's meaningful leadership and participation, strengthening technical expertise in the area of gender equality, investing in gender and conflict analysis and ensuring adequate financing for gender

equality and women and peace and security programming. I am committed to ensuring the increased visibility and promotion of this agenda at every opportunity. In July, the Deputy Secretary-General led a joint high-level mission of the United Nations and the African Union to Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo — the first-ever mission of its kind to focus on women, peace, security and development.[3] The findings of the mission were conveyed to the Security Council the following month, and I welcome the request of Council members to make the conduct of such missions a more regular practice.

8. At the United Nations, we have begun to undertake initiatives that respond to the 2015 high-level reviews. The women's peace and humanitarian fund[4] is supporting programmes on the ground. The Security Council now holds regular expert meetings on women and peace and security and invites representatives of civil society to participate in country-specific briefings. Gender equality is given prominence in other peace and security agendas, including on preventing violent extremism and human trafficking and on youth, peace and security. I am encouraged by the proliferation of initiatives on inclusive mediation and national implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and the tireless pursuit of justice, dignity and support for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence. These are all signs of a growing chorus in the international community of those who are appalled by the persistent and archaic political marginalization of women in decision-making on peace and security issues and who are determined to find solutions to the suffering unleashed by the recent wave of conflict and humanitarian crises.

A. Implementing the women and peace and security agenda in peace processes and in efforts to prevent the emergence and relapse of violent conflict

9. On 13 September 2017, I announced the creation of a High-level Advisory Board on Mediation, which will provide me with advice on mediation initiatives around the world. The Board is composed of 18 current and former global leaders, senior officials and renowned experts, 9 of them women. As the United Nations commits to a surge in diplomacy for peace, my mediation and conflict prevention initiatives will build on ongoing work, such as that carried out by the joint programme of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Department of Political Affairs on building national capacity for conflict prevention, that supports conflict analysis and seeks to increase the inclusivity of mediation processes as well as technical assistance, capacity-building and resources, where needed, with a view to achieving equal representation of women among national and local mediators. In my 2018 report on women and peace and security, I intend to place a special emphasis on assessing the quality of participation and representation of women in peace processes, including in the various institutions tasked with implementing peace agreements. I urge Member States to contribute information and analysis in this regard. Although such data can be challenging to track, it is essential for the improvement of strategies for sustaining peace.

10. The United Nations must support measures that increase women's participation in peace processes at all levels. At this time, inclusive processes should be the rule, not the exception. While global data on women's participation and influence in peace processes show improvement over time, the data available for 2016 indicate some concerning trends and expose ongoing barriers to the meaningful participation

[3] See S/PV.8022.

[4] Formerly the Global Acceleration Instrument for Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action, as per a decision of its Funding Board in September 2017; see www.wphfund.org.

of women in mediation, ranging from women's overall participation in mediation to requests for and inclusion of gender expertise in such processes to consultations with civil society and the inclusion of gender-sensitive provisions in peace agreements. This non-linear progress highlights the need to translate good practice into standard practice and to ensure that effective mechanisms are established to ensure the meaningful measurement of results.

11. Women continue to be underrepresented among delegations to peace processes led or co-led by the United Nations and as chief negotiators, despite the existence of a normative framework for women's meaningful and equal participation and an evidence base supporting the link between women's participation and the durability of peace agreements. The number of women who have served as chief mediators remains low, although in 2016 several women appointed to senior roles assumed mediation-related and good offices functions.[5]

12. In 2016 there was a slight decrease in women's overall participation among delegations to peace processes led or co-led by the United Nations compared with the previous year. Of the 9 processes tracked,[6] senior women were represented in 11 delegations, compared with in 8 processes and 12 delegations in 2015 and 9 processes and 17 delegations in 2014. Similar to previous years, not every negotiating party included senior women delegates. Where women were represented, they were in the minority, a trend that is evident in all peace processes. For instance, at the 2016 Myanmar Union peace conference, a peace process not co-led by the United Nations, only 7 women were included in a 75-member delegation.

13. There were also fewer requests for gender expertise for those processes. In 2016, such expertise was requested and provided in only four of seven (57 per cent) applicable mediation processes led or co-led by the United Nations,[7] a decrease from 89 per cent in 2015, 67 per cent in 2014 and 88 per cent in 2013. Of the processes that did not request specific gender expertise in 2016, two included long-term engagements with the same parties for which the United Nations has provided gender expertise in previous years.[8]

14. While the improved capacity of staff and senior leadership does not replace dedicated gender expertise, the Department of Political Affairs has since 2011 been building that capacity and promoting overall awareness of gender-specific commitments, thereby providing the tools and strategies necessary for gender-sensitive mediation, including through the recent publication of Guidance on Gender and Inclusive Mediation Strategies, which offers practical strategies and tools to assist in the design of inclusive mediation strategies and the incorporation of gender-sensitive provisions in thematic areas of peace agreements. In addition, all mediation support teams backstopping ongoing peace processes led or co-led by

[5] This includes women holding positions of Deputy Special Representative (5), Special Coordinator (1) and Deputy Special Advisers (3) supporting mediation-related processes and good offices, including in Cyprus, Lebanon, Libya and West Africa.

[6] In 2016 the United Nations served as the lead or co-lead mediator in 11 mediation processes, 2 of which were established to settle border and name disputes, processes for which data are not tracked, and 9 of which were active. The active processes relate to: Cyprus; the Geneva International Discussions; Equatorial Guinea and Gabon; Guyana and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of); Libya; the Sudan (Darfur); the Syrian Arab Republic; Western Sahara; and Yemen.

[7] As two negotiations take place at the Minister/Head of State level to settle border and name disputes, the provision of gender expertise and the consultations with civil society organizations are not directly applicable.

[8] Expertise was previously requested in the long-term engagements of Western Sahara and the Geneva International Discussions.

the United Nations in 2016 included women, an accomplishment maintained since 2012.

15. Inclusive mediation processes require consultation with diverse stakeholders, including women's organizations. Yet while consultations with civil society were carried out in 100 per cent of peace negotiations led or co-led by the United Nations in 2014 and 2015, the figure dropped to 86 per cent in 2016, when such consultations were conducted in only six of seven processes.[9] Several of the consultations, however, illustrate the willingness and capacity of civil society to participate in consultations despite extremely difficult contexts. For example, the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria continued to work with the women's advisory board and established a civil society support room. Through those mechanisms, the Special Envoy and senior advisers have consulted more than 130 representatives of over 500 civil society organizations. Between 30 and 40 per cent of participants in those consultations were women, and their representation increased steadily. While consultations are important for ensuring that the perspectives of Syrian society are represented at the talks being held in Geneva, they do not constitute direct participation and meaningful inclusion of women in negotiating parties' delegations to peace talks, as called for in Security Council resolution 2242 (2015). In Colombia, under its current mandate to verify the ceasefire and laying down of weapons by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia — People's Army, the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia facilitated dialogue between women's organizations and members of the monitoring and verification mechanism, building confidence in the process among local communities.

16. After consistent increases between 2010 and 2015, the percentage of signed peace agreements containing gender-specific provisions declined in 2016,[10] when only half of the six signed agreements[11] contained such provisions, as compared with 70 per cent in 2015. The average number of gender-specific provisions contained in peace agreements in 2016 was inflated because the comprehensive Colombian peace agreement contained more than 100 such provisions.[12] Although causal data are not available, women's participation and leadership in mediation efforts and gender expertise have a significant impact on the inclusion of gender-sensitive provisions in peace agreements, as demonstrated by the Colombian example.

17. One positive trend has been the initiation of national and regional networks of women mediators. In March 2017, the African Union established the African Network of Women in Conflict Prevention and Peace Mediation, also known as "FemWise". Led by Italy, the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network is expected to be launched before the end of 2017, building on the Initiative on Mediation in the Mediterranean. Emerging networks, along with existing ones such as the Nordic Women's Mediators Network, provide a resource for linking knowledge and capacity across mediation efforts locally and globally. I stress the importance of ensuring synergy and collaboration among such networks to promote mutual learning, information-sharing, sustainability and use of the expertise and resources

[9] In the Darfur (Sudan) process, no consultations with civil society took place in 2016.

[10] For the purpose of data collection, the Department of Political Affairs includes cessation-of-hostilities or ceasefire agreements and comprehensive and partial peace agreements under the term "peace agreements". These are signed by at least two parties to a conflict intending to end or significantly transform a violent conflict so that it may be addressed in a more constructive manner.

[11] Concluded in Afghanistan, Colombia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

[12] The Democratic Republic of the Congo is the only other country that signed a peace agreement with at least one provision on conflict-related sexual violence in 2016.

they provide as we strive to achieve the equal and meaningful participation of women as mediators, and requested my Senior Adviser on Policy to support efforts in that regard.

B. Protecting and promoting the rights and leadership of women and girls in mission and humanitarian settings

18. The world is facing a protection crisis. At the end of 2016 there were more than 65.5 million forcibly displaced individuals worldwide.[13] Durable solutions must be developed that address the root causes of violence and conflict, ensure meaningful and equal participation of women and support the efforts of institutions to meet the needs of all, especially those who are most at risk and the hardest to reach. Effective collaboration will require intensified action across a broad range of areas. Sexual and gender-based violence must be addressed outright and as early warning indicators of conflict and violence, and gender-sensitive protection environments must be ensured.

19. I am deeply concerned about all forms of gender-based violence, including violations against women's human rights defenders, who stand at the front lines to protect and promote the rights of women and girls and gender equality overall. Alarming accounts of threats and violence continue to emerge across regions, with individuals or groups targeted for speaking out against violations and for challenging traditional notions of family and gender roles in their societies. The repression of human rights, particularly the right of women to the enjoyment of freedom of speech, assembly and other fundamental rights, is an early warning sign of impending conflict.[14] Similarly, new research has demonstrated a correlation between rates of violence against women and outbreaks of conflict, further underscoring the need to consider the security of women and girls in conflict prevention efforts.[15] I urge Member States to develop and institutionalize protection mechanisms for defenders of women's human rights, publicly condemn violence and discrimination against them and acknowledge their critical contribution to peace and security.

Addressing conflict-related sexual violence

20. While progress towards the prevention of and response to conflict has multiplied over the past decade, conflict-related sexual violence continues to be perpetrated across diverse situational and country contexts. Dynamic investments must be made to address the root causes of conflict-related sexual violence, including the broad and interconnected dimensions of pre-existing sexual and gender-based violence and the stigma experienced by survivors of sexual violence and their children, both of which are of critical importance in the context of conflict-related displacement and population movements, as well as the abduction, trafficking, return and reintegration of women and girls.

[13] See Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), "Global trends: forced displacement in 2016" (Geneva, 2017).

[14] For information regarding the correlation between high levels of repression and impending conflict see Martin Smidt and others, *The Global Conflict Risk Index (GCRI): Manual for Data Management and Product Output*, ver. 5 (European Union, 2016); and Patrick Regan and Daniel Norton, "Greed, grievance, and mobilization in civil wars", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 49, No. 3 (2005).

[15] Jocelyn Kelly, "Intimate partner violence and conflict: understanding the links between political violence and personal violence" (forthcoming and cited as a background paper) in "Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict — Main Messages and Emerging Policy Directions", World Bank, Washington, D.C., 2017.

21. In 2016, the Human Rights Council investigated and received reports of sexual and gender-based violence in the Syrian Arab Republic, Eritrea, Libya and South Sudan.[16] The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) completed a comprehensive mapping exercise that documented widespread sexual and gender-based violence and other human rights violations in the country since 2003.[17] I am encouraged that many parties are collaborating with my Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict to develop time-bound commitments to address such violations. For example, remedial action taken by Côte d'Ivoire resulted in the removal of its armed forces from the list of parties credibly suspected of committing conflict-related sexual violence (see S/2017/249, annex).

22. In my latest report on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2017/249), I brought to the Council's attention 19 situations of concern and an updated list of 46 parties to conflict credibly suspected of committing or instigating rape and other forms of sexual violence in situations of armed conflict.[18] In some settings, such as South Sudan and the Syrian Arab Republic, sexual violence continues to rise to alarming levels. In others, such as Nepal and Sri Lanka, impunity for sexual violence continues to send an unacceptable message to perpetrators that their crimes will go unpunished. I reiterate that parties that are listed repeatedly in my annual reports on conflict-related sexual violence cannot participate in United Nations peacekeeping operations, and I urge Member States and the Security Council to ensure that sanctions regimes have the mandate and capacity to address such violations.

23. Investment in resources for survivors must span legal and essential services, addressing distinct vulnerabilities for those forcibly displaced and others. This necessarily includes access to mental health and psychosocial support, shelter, livelihood support, justice and reparations, and sexual and reproductive health services, including the treatment and prevention of HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections and the safe termination of pregnancies resulting from rape, without discrimination and in accordance with international human rights and humanitarian law. Examples of such survivor-centred programmes include the integrated multisectoral gender-based violence prevention and response programmes of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Myanmar and the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in creating and enhancing medical referral systems for sexual and gender-based violence in nine countries, which gave more than 485,000 refugees and other persons of concern access to health care. More than 60 countries, international and regional organizations and non-governmental organizations have united through the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-based Violence in Emergencies. I welcome efforts to address the stigma associated with conflict-related sexual violence, such as the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and principles on tackling stigma, launched this year.

Promoting gender-responsive protective environments

24. I am pleased that progress has been made on gender-specific recommendations for peace operations and their transition emanating from the 2015 peace and

[16] Eritrea (A/HRC/32/47), Libya (A/HRC/31/CRP.3), South Sudan (A/HRC/31/49), Syrian Arab Republic (A/HRC/31/68, A/HRC/33/55, A/HRC/31/CRP.1, A/HRC/32/CRP.2).

[17] See MINUSCA and others, "Report of the mapping project documenting serious violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law committed within the territory of the Central African Republic between January 2003 and December 2015" (May 2017).

[18] That report should be read in conjunction with the eight previous reports on conflict-related sexual violence, which provide a cumulative basis for the inclusion of parties in the annexed list.

security reviews. The Departments of Political Affairs, Peacekeeping Operations and Field Support continued their efforts to build staff capacity and senior-level accountability on gender and on women and peace and security. Actions included the elevation of the head of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations/Department of Field Support Gender Task Force from the Director to the Under-Secretary-General level, the establishment of a "gender in peacekeeping" dashboard to support senior leadership in monitoring progress across peace operations and targeted senior leadership training on women and peace and security commitments. Those initiatives have contributed to improved accountability in the implementation of women and peace and security mandates across peacekeeping operations. In addition, as mandated by the Security Council in its resolution 2242 (2015), specific training on gender-sensitive reporting was delivered to more than 200 staff members across missions and at Headquarters. I plan to include information on the results of those measures in the next annual report.

25. Provisions on women and peace and security are included in police and military concepts of operations and military force operations orders,[19] and gender is increasingly integrated into national predeployment training, military exercises and courses on peace operations. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support have strengthened the gender components of their core predeployment training curriculum, and revisions of department-wide policies and guidance on gender equality are under way, with the United Nations Police Gender Toolkit already extensively used by field missions.

26. Although women's representation among uniformed components of peacekeeping operations contributes to mission success,[20] women are deployed at remarkably low levels. As at 31 December 2016, women constituted 7.4 per cent of military observers and staff officers. Women's overall representation among military troops, however, remained at 4 per cent. Women constituted only 10 per cent of all police officers, with 17 per cent among individual police officers and only 7 per cent among formed police units, similar to the level in 2015.[21] However, despite the low numbers, women are being deployed as contingent commanders, and several missions now have female police and military peacekeeper networks and military gender advisers.

27. Increasing women's participation in national uniformed services may contribute to an increase in the number of women deployed in United Nations missions. Targeted outreach has increased the awareness of women officers of opportunities within the military component. For example, since 2015 more than 240 female military officers have completed two-week training courses, hosted by China, Kenya and India, with support from the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), to boost their readiness for deployment in peace operations. In 2017, Finland ran its first gender-balanced United Nations military observer course. In 2016, the Police Division of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations trained 750 female police officers from seven police-contributing countries, 358 of whom passed the Assessment for Mission Service test, 218 of whom were subsequently deployed. This number represented 32 per cent of individual female police officer deployments in 2016.

28. In line with the 2016 United Nations peacekeeping defence ministerial commitments, the Office of Military Affairs of the Department of Peacekeeping

[19] As at mid-2017, 100 per cent of military concepts of operations and military force operations orders and 93 per cent of police concepts of operations included women and peace and security provisions — a level reached in 2015. These data are tracked systematically.

[20] See, e.g., A/70/357-S/2015/682, para. 82.

[21] The latest data are available from www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/resources/statistics/gender.shtml.

Operations has designated 300 posts for women only. It is a promising sign that the rank range for women military observers has expanded and the length of the tour of duty has been reduced to six months for women officers with young families. I welcome the proposal of the Military Adviser for Peacekeeping Operations to deploy mixed patrols and female engagement teams, as is done by Kenya and Zambia, as they will lead to better understanding of the needs of local communities.

29. I am encouraged by the efforts of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to develop a curriculum for senior female police officers in preparation for peacekeeping duties.

30. Stronger efforts are needed by all actors, however, to reach the global target of 15 per cent women military observers and staff officers being deployed by December 2017 and 20 per cent female police by 2020, agreed upon at the 2016 United Nations Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial Conference. I have requested the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department of Field Support, UN-Women and the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, together with troop-contributing countries, to develop a dedicated strategy to significantly increase the number of women peacekeepers and police in peacekeeping missions. I urge my leadership group to take measures to address the structural barriers that limit women's meaningful participation in both the uniformed and civilian components of peacekeeping and urge Member States to look at ways of operationalizing the request of the Security Council in its resolution 2242 (2015) that incentives be adopted.

31. The gains for women and peace and security and gender equality made during the life of a mission must be safeguarded during transition as the transformative changes that ensure non-recurrence and regression into conflict. While enhanced protection functions and the designation of focal points on conflict-related sexual violence in the human rights components of peace operations have strengthened the monitoring of human rights violations targeting women and improved the coordination of monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements, robust and relevant gender analysis is an essential component of this result. The United Nations is committed to accelerating efforts to integrate gender-responsive conflict analysis and expertise in mission planning, mandate development, implementation, review, budget analysis and all mission transitions and drawdowns. Analysis that relies on high-quality disaggregated data should be included in all conflict prevention work and efforts by the United Nations, other international organizations, national actors and civil society.

32. The new generation of United Nations country teams must ensure partnership with civil society and the full integration of gender expertise, guaranteeing careful prioritization and the strategic repositioning of gender-related issues in missions to Governments and country teams. The proposed multi-partner trust fund for Liberia, for example, aims to bridge the financing gap as the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) withdraws next year and should from the outset strive to allocate a minimum of 15 per cent of all funding for gender equality and women's empowerment. Such efforts may prove to be an example for future mission drawdowns.

Addressing sexual exploitation and abuse

33. In 2016, 145 new allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse were made against United Nations staff, 80 against uniformed personnel and 65 against civilians, including staff from departments and offices of the Secretariat, agencies, funds and programmes. Those 145 allegations involved at least 311 victims, nearly all of them women and girls. Of the cases reported, 103 occurred in the context of

peace operations, and 73 of 80 allegations against uniformed personnel involved members of the military. Of the allegations related to field missions, 69 per cent were received from MINUSCA and the United Nations Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). Of those, 57 per cent involved sexual abuse in the form of non-consensual sexual activities with an adult or any form of sexual activity with minors.

34. Detailed information on allegations received in 2016, including against non-United Nations forces operating under a Security Council mandate, is provided in my report on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, along with recommendations for intensified action (A/71/818). I welcome the Security Council's unprecedented step of adopting resolution 2272 (2016) on sexual exploitation and abuse. Those violations, apart from destroying lives, seriously damage and jeopardize the good work of peace missions and the Organization.

35. Eradicating sexual exploitation and abuse is a priority and one of my first orders of business. As part of a new comprehensive strategy (see A/71/818), I have committed to putting victims' rights at the forefront of United Nations efforts and am working tirelessly to end impunity for such crimes. I recently appointed the first-ever victims' rights advocate, and a trust fund was established in 2016 to support services for victims. Over the past year, under the umbrella of the Special Coordinator on Improving the United Nations Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, the United Nations upgraded and aligned tools across the system, including the development and implementation of a victim assistance protocol, the harmonization of investigation standards and complaint mechanisms and the implementation of a standardized reporting form across the United Nations system.

36. As eradicating sexual exploitation and abuse can be achieved only in partnership with Member States, at my high-level meeting on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, held on 18 September 2017, I launched several initiatives that demonstrate this partnership. I introduced my circle of leadership, in which Heads of State and Government pledged to stand with me to end impunity, to strengthen measures to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse, to respond rapidly and decisively to credible reports and to meet the needs of victims quickly and appropriately. I also launched a voluntary compact with Member States to strengthen commitments to address sexual exploitation and abuse. I welcome the outcomes of the United Nations Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial Conference, hosted by the United Kingdom in September 2016, at which more than 60 countries pledged to adopt measures to tackle sexual exploitation and abuse perpetrated by United Nations peacekeepers.

Promoting gender equality and women and girls' empowerment in humanitarian action, including guaranteeing access to essential services

37. As at 30 June 2017, 141.1 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance, an increase from 125.3 million in 2015, as cycles of conflict and unprecedented natural and climate change-related disasters continued to have devastating effects, including massive forced displacement.[22] Gender inequality compounds the ubiquitous conflict and emergency-related obstacles to safe access to food, water, sanitation, hygiene, health care, education, employment, housing, legal identity, resources and more. Factors such as sex, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, race and ethnic, religious and political identity can lead to further discrimination. Women's knowledge, community networks and leadership capacity continue to be underutilized, lessening the effectiveness of many humanitarian efforts.

[22] See www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/GHO-JuneStatusReport2017.pdf.

38. Lack of access to health-care services, including sexual, reproductive and HIV-related services, has a devastating impact on women and girls, particularly in emergency-affected settings. Data continue to show disturbing gaps, including in maternal mortality rates, which are almost twice as high as the global ratio in conflict and post-conflict countries.[23] Non-discriminatory holistic health care and other services, including sexual and reproductive health care and mental health and psychosocial support, must be delivered to women and girls in accordance with international humanitarian and human rights law.

39. Examples of such efforts in the most challenging settings include a network of maternal health clinics in South Sudan supported by the International Organization for Migration and medical and psychosocial assistance for survivors of gender-based violence provided by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Somalia. The International Planned Parenthood Federation, through Australia's contributions, responded to 71 humanitarian crises, reaching over 890,000 people with crucial sexual and reproductive health services in 2016. Too often, insufficient resources and wavering political support undermine the effectiveness of holistic health services in these humanitarian settings. I recognize the efforts of Member States to bridge this funding gap, including through the She Decides initiative.

40. Conflicts and emergencies also limit or end girls' access to education. The gender gap in the global adjusted net enrolment rate in primary and secondary education widens significantly in conflict and post-conflict countries, and girls in conflict countries are almost two and a half times more likely to be out of school than those in non-conflict settings.[24] A basic human right, education helps protect girls and young women from violations, including human trafficking and early and child marriage. Yet less than 2.7 per cent of humanitarian funding is devoted to education.[25] I encourage efforts to fill those gaps, including such private partnerships as the Instant Network Schools programme and Education Cannot Wait, the first global fund to prioritize education in humanitarian contexts, which aims to raise $3.85 billion by 2020 to educate 75 million children living in crisis-affected countries.

41. Statelessness and unequal nationality laws drive conflict and instability and have a disparate impact on women and girls. In 26 countries, 8 of which are affected by conflict,[26] women do not have the right to confer their nationality to their children. I am alarmed by the grave situation in Myanmar, where the Rohingya are systematically denied their right to citizenship and targeted for violence, including sexual and gender-based violence.[27] In many countries hosting Syrian refugees, it remains a challenge to register children whose fathers are missing, including children born to survivors of rape, heightening their risk of statelessness.[28] I welcome such initiatives as those carried out by UNHCR in Chad, where more than 6,000 returnees from the Central African Republic have undergone biometric registration and nationality verification through a European Union-funded programme supporting returnees and helping to prevent statelessness. The African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) worked to address protection risks among internally displaced women arising from their forfeiture of

[23] See S/2016/822, para. 32.

[24] See http://gem-report-2016.unesco.org/en/gender-review/.

[25] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), "Aid to education is stagnating and not going to countries most in need", policy paper No. 31, May 2017.

[26] Burundi, Iraq, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Somalia, the Sudan and the Syrian Arab Republic.

[27] Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, "Interviews with Rohingyas fleeing from Myanmar since 9 October 2016", flash report, February 2017.

[28] S/2017/249 and General Assembly resolution 70/291.

identity documents, which was a prerequisite to their receiving space to which to relocate.

42. Against the deterioration of humanitarian situations and the increase in related protection concerns globally, the implementation of the 2016 New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (resolution 71/1) and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (resolution 69/283, annex II) is critical, as is the redoubling of efforts to act on the commitments made at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit (see A/71/353), including by facilitating women's leadership and participation in humanitarian action, preventing and responding to gender-based violence in crisis and ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive rights.

Implementing the women and peace and security agenda in efforts to prevent and counter terrorism and violent extremism

43. Terrorist and violent extremist groups have continued to carry out attacks against civilians, with the subjugation and exploitation of women and girls a common element across the agendas of the various groups. Because of this, the advancement of gender equality is key to stemming abuse, exploitation and recruitment by violent extremist and terrorist groups. The international community must remain steadfast in ensuring that its responses are consistent with international law and that the full implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, with its emphasis on conflict prevention and the meaningful participation of women, is integral to its response.

44. Women play critical roles in crisis prevention, working with governments and communities to build resilience. Member States and United Nations entities must improve and increase their collaboration with civil society, financing projects that address the root causes of violent extremism and terrorism and the gender dimension of the recruitment strategies of extremist and terrorist groups. This was exemplified by the consultations of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) Human Rights Unit with civil society to understand the various perspectives on violent extremism and identify existing efforts to resist patriarchy, violence, extremist narratives and instrumentalization by government actors, providing a blueprint for further action, programming in the area of women and peace and security and a direct link to preventing violent extremism.

45. At the same time, some women actively support terrorist groups, ideologically and operationally, and use their voices to legitimize violent extremist narratives. The most recent figures suggest that women make up at least 20-30 per cent of foreign terrorist fighters, with the participation of women growing to an unprecedented level.[29] While the participation of women in terrorist activities is not a new phenomenon, it is now recognized within the global framework for the prevention of violent extremism and for counter-terrorism that gender-sensitive analysis and responses are necessary for effectively achieving both aims.

46. Terrorist and violent extremist groups also manipulate gender norms and stereotypes to carry out recruitment and attacks. For example, Boko Haram has been increasingly reported to use women and girls to carry out its suicide attacks.[30] As a result, in Cameroon, Chad, the Niger and Nigeria, almost one of every five suicide

[29] See Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, "Implementation of Security Council resolution 2178 (2014) by States affected by foreign terrorist fighters", a compilation of three reports (S/2015/338; S/2015/683; S/2015/975) (2016).

[30] See S/2017/563 and S/2017/764, and Jason Warner and Hilary Matfess, "Exploding stereotypes: the unexpected operational and demographic characteristics of Boko Haram's suicide bombers", (Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, 2017).

bombers is a child and three quarters of all child suicide bombers are girls.[31] Terrorist and violent extremist groups also utilize sexual and gender-based violence, including human trafficking, sexual slavery, forced marriage and forced pregnancy, to terrorize communities and generate revenue, as highlighted in resolution 2331 (2016).

47. I recognize the progress made through the adoption of Security Council resolution 2242 (2015) and the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (A/70/674) and the 2016 review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (A/70/826 and A/70/826/Corr.1). Member States are increasingly encouraged to engage women's leadership and incorporate gender into policies and strategies for preventing and countering violent extremism and terrorism. I welcome efforts by Member States to initiate human rights-based and gender-sensitive approaches to the rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees and victims, released prisoners and suspects who qualify for alternatives to prosecution. I am encouraged by the efforts of the Office of Counter-Terrorism and the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate in supporting women's leadership and participation and the efforts of the Union for the Mediterranean, with UN-Women and UNDP, to contribute further to the evidence indicating the extent to which political marginalization and human rights abuses drive women and men into violent extremist groups.

48. I commend efforts to strengthen networks of women's civil society organizations operating in contexts of violent extremism and terrorism and to ensure that their perspectives feed into broader work on prevention and response, including that of the Women's Alliance for Security Leadership in support of innovative civil society-led efforts to prevent violent extremism.[32] The Global Solutions Exchange, launched in 2016, provides an encouraging example through its support to high-level dialogue between civil society and governments on preventing violent extremism. Several countries and organizations are implementing training and education for women as mothers, educators, law enforcement personnel and religious leaders to prevent radicalization and recruitment.[33] However, as the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has advised (A/HRC/31/65), such interventions must not "securitize" women's rights or reinforce gender stereotypes that limit women's agency or exacerbate gender inequality — which can, in turn, drive radicalization and violence and heighten the risks faced by women and girls.

C. Building inclusive and peaceful societies

49. Women peace activists of diverse ages and backgrounds are at the forefront in sustaining peace and they require support and access to maximize their vital contributions to peacebuilding. The forthcoming progress study on youth, peace and security, mandated by the Security Council in its resolution 2250 (2015), is already finding evidence, through research and consultations with young people around the world, of the unrecognized role of and multiple forms of discrimination against young women as peacebuilders. A United Nations-World Bank study stressed that high levels of gender inequality and gender-based violence in a society can be

[31] United Nations Children's Fund, "Beyond Chibok", April 2016.

[32] Sanam Naraghi Anderlini, "Uncomfortable truths, unconventional wisdoms: women's perspectives on violent extremism and security interventions", Women's Alliance for Security Leadership, brief No. 1, March 2016.

[33] Naureen Chowdhury Fink, Sara Zeiger and Rafia Bhulai, eds., "A man's world?: Exploring the roles of women in countering terrorism and violent extremism" (Hedayah and the Global Center on Cooperative Security, 2016).

associated with increased vulnerability to civil and inter-State war.[34] Research on "masculinities" is also contributing transformative recommendations towards more gender-equal and peaceful societies.[35] I note the Peacebuilding Commission's role in sustaining peace and the need for Member States to ensure strong implementation of the gender strategy adopted in 2016 and the inclusion of gender considerations into the Commission's work.

Economic recovery and access to resources

50. Women's economic empowerment has a positive effect on overall post-conflict recovery and economic growth. However, large-scale investment in post-conflict economies often focuses on infrastructure, extractive industries and commercial agriculture, where women are underrepresented or excluded. Instead, recovery targeting women often focuses on small-scale and local initiatives, including community loans, revolving credit and revenue-generating cooperatives. While such efforts can be meaningful, they should not preclude women's access to large-scale economic recovery and must actively resist any move to return to the status quo of discrimination of women with respect to access to economic resources, property, inheritance, land tenure and ownership and natural resources. The United Nations, Member States and other stakeholders must ensure that post-conflict economic recovery responds to the needs of all sectors of society and that women hold leadership positions relevant to the design and implementation of post-conflict recovery plans.

51. The Sustainable Development Goals[36] and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda[37] commit the international community to development and financing frameworks that integrate the fundamental principles of gender equality and non-discrimination. Both agendas go beyond women's right to equal participation in the economy, addressing also foreign direct investment, illicit financial and arms flows and the collection and intersectional disaggregation of data, with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda also highlighting the need for gender-responsive budgeting. I acknowledge women's efforts to ensure accountability for the crimes of transnational corporations and the proactive efforts of the United Nations, along with Member States and civil society, to transform gender inequality through economic recovery. In 2016, for example, UNDP increased the monetary benefits received by women from temporary employment in the context of early recovery programmes by more than $16 million compared with 2015, with women receiving 47 per cent of benefits in countries where disaggregated data are available, an increase from 46 per cent in 2015 and 38 per cent in 2014.[38]

Governance and women's participation in elected and non-elected bodies

52. Significant challenges concerning the inclusiveness of the electoral process remain, particularly in conflict and post-conflict settings. Structural barriers to women's participation in political processes persist at all levels, with ongoing

[34] International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict* (Washington, D.C., World Bank Group, 2017).

[35] Shereen El Feki, Brian Heilman and Gary Barker, eds., *Understanding Masculinities: Results from the International Men and Gender Equality Survey — Middle East and North Africa* (Cairo and Washington, D.C., UN-Women and Promundo-US, 2017).

[36] Resolution 70/1.

[37] Resolution 69/313, annex.

[38] Covering Afghanistan, Burundi, the Central African Republic, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Iraq, Lebanon, Mali, Mauritania, South Sudan, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine, Yemen and the State of Palestine. The indicator measures monetary equivalent of benefits.

challenges with respect to the investigation and prosecution of violence and assaults on or harassment of women elected officials and candidates for political office. Increasing women's participation and representation in governance and decision-making, including in national legislatures and local councils, is not only called for under the women and peace and security agenda, but also directly contributes to sustaining peace. Women's representation is consistently and positively linked to the durability of peace and perceptions of good governance.[39]

53. As at 1 July 2017, only 17 countries had elected a woman Head of State or Government, including one post-conflict country, Liberia.[40] During the past year, the global proportion of parliamentary seats occupied by women has increased slightly, from 22.9 per cent in July 2016 to 23.6 per cent in July 2017. However, the proportion in conflict and post-conflict countries has stagnated in the past two years at 16 per cent. The use of legislative quotas has promoted women's representation, especially where they are enforced. In countries where such quotas are applied,[41] women occupied 22.5 per cent of parliamentary seats, compared with 10.7 per cent in those where they are not. For example, in Somalia in 2016, following the partial implementation of a temporary special measure stipulating that 30 per cent of representatives to the House of the People must be women, representation jumped to 24.4 per cent, compared with 14 per cent following the 2012 process. Women's representation in non-elected positions also remains below gender parity; a review of public administrations in 13 conflict and post-conflict countries showed that women held an average of 21.3 per cent of decision-making positions.[42]

54. In 2016, the Department of Political Affairs, UN-Women and UNDP undertook efforts to improve the trends described above, providing technical assistance for gender-sensitive electoral processes and continuing systematic efforts to ensure that all United Nations electoral assistance policies and activities are gender sensitive. Peace operations led by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations continued to support initiatives to promote women's political participation in different contexts, including in the Central African Republic and Haiti. The Electoral Assistance Division of the Department of Political Affairs, supported by United Nations partners, has continued to ensure that gender is mainstreamed in all United Nations electoral policy documents and that all needs-assessment reports include gender-specific analysis and recommendations.

55. In addition to the improved efforts to curb the negative trends described above, the international community must remain ready to effectively measure progress. National statistical systems can increase their effectiveness by increasing and improving the collection of data necessary to populate baselines for Sustainable Development Goal indicators relating to the proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments and local governments (5.5.1(b)) and to proportional

[39] See, for example, Sarah Shair-Rosenfield and Reed Wood, "Governing well after war: how improving female representation prolongs post-conflict peace", in *Journal of Politics*, vol. 79, No. 3 (July 2017);and Thomas Carothers, "Democracy support strategies: leading with women's political empowerment" (Washington, D.C., Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2016).

[40] In the present report, conflict and post-conflict countries include countries or territories in which a political, peacebuilding or peacekeeping mission operated during 2016, or concerning which the Security Council was seized and which had been considered by the Council at a formal meeting during the period from 1 January to 31 December 2016, or that had received programmatic funds from the Peacebuilding Fund in 2016.

[41] Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Iraq, Kyrgyzstan, Libya, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Sudan and the Sudan.

[42] Reported by UNDP, "Global initiative on gender equality in public administration" (New York, 2014), drawing on 13 countries for which data are available: Afghanistan, Burundi, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Lebanon, Mali, Nepal, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Uganda, the State of Palestine and Kosovo.

representation in public institutions (16.7.1). At present, no global baselines for these indicators exist, hindering possibilities for further research on and recognition of the contributions of local-level women leaders, including in conflict-affected settings.

Promotion of women's roles in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control

56. The past year saw the continued use of heavy and unconventional weapons, including chemical and explosive weapons, in civilian areas, with grave impacts on civilian populations, particularly in the Syrian Arab Republic. I reiterate the importance of focusing on the gender-specific effects of armed violence and the promotion of the role of women in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control to understand how illicit arms flows and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons feed a continuum of violence. Even after the conclusion of formal peace agreements, unresolved root causes of conflict and illicit financial and arms flows often fuel gang activity and alarming rates of everyday violence, including femicide.

57. On 7 July 2017, 122 Member and observer States voted to adopt the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (A/CONF.229/2017/8), a historic achievement resulting from decades of anti-nuclear-weapon campaigns, which engaged many women-led organizations and networks. At the Sixth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in June 2016, States noted the impact of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons on the realization of Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality.

58. Both the Treaty and the Programme of Action call for the equal and effective participation of women and men. Under the Treaty, States commit to supporting women's participation in disarmament and gender-sensitive victim assistance. The third United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action, to be held in 2018, presents an opportunity to continue progress and to underscore the importance of gender considerations in the control of and reporting on the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, the need for broader participation of women in disarmament and the mandatory inclusion of gender considerations in all funding applications for the United Nations trust facility supporting cooperation on arms regulation.

59. Data on and analysis of the control of illicit small arms and light weapons often fail to capture progress towards gender-specific commitments. However, the revised reporting template for the Programme of Action will contribute to accountability through the provision of data.

60. In its resolution 2122 (2013), the Security Council called for women's full participation in gender-responsive disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and in security sector reform. I welcome the Council's efforts to address those requirements in recent country-specific resolutions and call upon all peace operations with such components to ensure robust gender dynamics in the planning and implementation phases.[67] Data from disarmament and community violence reduction initiatives implemented by the United Nations in five field missions[68] in 2016 indicate that 26 per cent of participants in programmes for the reintegration of ex-combatants and youth at risk were women, up from 12 per cent in 2015 and the same share as in 2014. I acknowledge initiatives to enhance women's participation

[67] See, for example, resolutions 2295 (2016) (Mali), 2301 (2016) (Central African Republic), and *2344 (2017) (Afghanistan)*.

[68] The United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), MINUSMA, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), and UNAMID.

in the area of mine action. For example, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) trained victims of explosive incidents and persons with disabilities, half of whom were women, to provide risk education in their communities.

Rule of law and access to justice

61. Structural inequalities, poverty and discrimination hinder the access of women and girls to justice and security as well as to transitional justice processes. A gender-responsive legal and judicial system constitutes one of the building blocks of a resilient society. Transitional justice mechanisms and rule of law institutions in transition and conflict contexts should be supported in addressing inequality and responding to the most urgent needs of women affected by conflict, should ensure accountability for sexual and gender-based violence, should ensure the fair administration of both formal and informal justice processes and should implement specific steps to promote women in leadership positions. National justice systems must be strengthened to facilitate the investigation and prosecution of sexual and gender-based crimes consistent with international standards and in compliance with the principles of non-discrimination. Moreover, in the prosecution of members of terrorist and violent extremist groups, consideration must be given to the gender-related nature of crimes and indeed the full body of international criminal law, including crimes against humanity and genocide, and not be limited to only the terrorist crimes themselves.

62. As judges and commissioners in transitional justice and rule of law institutions, women remain unequally represented. As at 1 July 2017, women comprised 27.7 per cent of commissioners on United Nations-supported truth commissions; in Tunisia, 5 of 11 commissioners were women; and in Mali, 5 of 25 commissioners were women. Women are also underrepresented in the recently established national criminal tribunals for conflict-related crimes, such as the Specialist Court for Kosovo, where 5 of the 25 judges appointed to the chambers are women. I encourage the Special Criminal Court in the Central African Republic to institute proactive recruitment strategies so as to ensure gender parity in staffing at all levels.[47]

63. The Global Focal Point for Police, Justice and Corrections arrangement of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, UNDP, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UNHCR, UN-Women and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has significantly improved gender mainstreaming in United Nations assistance to Member States on the rule of law, worked to ensure the inclusion of gender perspectives in joint assessments, planning, programming, resource mobilization and the rapid deployment of expertise and supported an overall culture in support of an integrated approach to women's access to justice programming. During the reporting period, the arrangement has supported the development and implementation of joint rule of law programmes with dedicated components to develop women's capacities and meet their needs in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Liberia, Mali, Somalia, the Sudan (Darfur), the State of Palestine and Kosovo.[48] A significant percentage of the budget of these joint multi-year rule of law programmes has been allocated to enhance women's access to justice and to support survivors of sexual and gender-based violence in the Central African Republic (16 per cent), Mali (20 per cent), Somalia (27 per cent) and the

[47] See MINUSCA and others, "Report of the mapping project".

[48] References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of resolution 1244 (1999).

State of Palestine (20 per cent), in line with the seven-point action plan for gender-responsive peacebuilding (A/65/354-S/2010/466).

64. In 2016 and 2017, Member States have made several notable contributions towards ending impunity. In 2017, Senegalese officials arrested a Guinean lieutenant, Aboubacar Diakité, for his role in crimes of sexual violence in Guinea, and officials in the Democratic Republic of the Congo arrested Ntabo Ntaberi Cheka, a rebel leader, for the mass rape of civilians in the country. UNDP has worked in Afghanistan to establish specialized courts to handle sexual and gender-based violence crimes and in Timor-Leste to support a mobile court initiative, bringing justice to those who are the hardest to reach. Moreover, MONUSCO worked to bring perpetrators of serious crimes, including crimes of sexual violence, to justice through prosecution support cells. In 2016, the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict continued to strengthen the capacity of national rule of law and justice actors, and UN-Women and Justice Rapid Response deployed 19 experts on sexual and gender-based violence to participate in investigations and accountability processes, including to all United Nations commissions of inquiry. I encourage Member States to continue to provide gender expertise in credible investigations of rape and sexual and other forms of violence in line with international human rights standards.

65. Holistic, survivor-focused initiatives further contribute to enhancing access to justice. In Mali, for example, the Peacebuilding Fund has supported a multisectoral, survivor-centred approach to facilitating access to justice, resulting in an increase in the number of cases of sexual violence brought to court in the regions of Gao and Timbuktu, from 1 per cent to almost 14 per cent. In Somaliland, UNODC, in cooperation with the World Health Organization and UNFPA, piloted a global tool to bridge gaps between medical services and justice processes for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, fostering coordination between the medical and legal systems. In Jordan, UNHCR supported the deployment of specialized lawyers in women's and girls' safe spaces in refugee camps, leading to improved access to justice for survivors of violence.

66. National authorities and civil society are also working with the United Nations to prevent and address sexual and gender-based violence and conflict-related sexual violence in Afghanistan, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guatemala, Iraq, Liberia, Mali, Sierra Leone, the Sudan and other countries. Such efforts include legal reform, legal assistance programmes, community security programmes, specialized services for victims and survivors of violence, awareness-raising campaigns and rehabilitation programmes. In Darfur, support was provided for the opening of a child-friendly family visiting bay in a women's prison, and in Kyrgyzstan, the participation of women in local public safety meetings led to the prioritization of sexual and gender-based violence in crime prevention plans.

67. UN-Women and the European Union jointly support gender-sensitive transitional justice in Colombia, Mali, Nepal, the Philippines and Kosovo, championing the participation of conflict-affected women and deploying gender advisers to transitional justice mechanisms. In Liberia, UNDP and OHCHR partnered with the Independent National Commission on Human Rights to strengthen the transitional justice process, commonly known as the Palava Hut programme, and increase the number of women participants. Cambodia and Germany have cooperated on a reconciliation project that involves working with survivors of forced marriage carried out during the rule of the Khmer Rouge to tell their stories through cultural activities and providing psychological support services.

D. Initiatives to monitor implementation and advance results

National accountability for commitments to women and peace and security

68. As at 31 August 2017, 68 countries or areas[47] had adopted national action plans on women and peace and security, and several other plans were in development. However, a closer analysis reveals that more than 20 national action plans have already expired or will expire soon. Moreover, of the national action plans adopted to date, only 12 have an allocated budget, and others have gaps in implementation, meaningful civil society inclusion and conflict prevention, particularly with respect to disarmament. I note efforts by Jordan and Nepal to examine the budgeting for their national action plans and urge Member States to integrate women and peace and security commitments into all national planning tools and instruments and to adopt and implement comprehensive national action plans and other frameworks on women and peace and security, with indicators to monitor progress and track allocations. I encourage countries with expired or expiring national action plans to take this opportunity to assess progress and strengthen policies, laws and programmes.

69. Currently 13 countries are implementing their second national action plan, and 7 are implementing their third. Of all current national action plans, 48 (72 per cent) have monitoring frameworks with progress indicators, and 18 (27 per cent) have designated implementation budgets, reflecting a slight increase from 25 per cent in 2016. These second- and third-generation plans are integrating emerging priorities, such as migration, climate change and violent extremism. In Nigeria, for example, the second national action plan expanded the concept of security to include issues of violent extremism, trauma and healing, disarmament and demobilization, and local or zonal action for further localization. At least seven national action plans have specifically highlighted women's roles in conflict prevention as a critical element of the women and peace and security agenda.[48]

70. The Women, Peace and Security National Focal Points Network, launched by 63 Member States last year in an initiative of Spain, had its inaugural meeting in April 2017 in Alicante, Spain (see S/2017/485). The meeting included more than 100 national focal points, government actors and civil society representatives from 61 countries discussing innovative uses of national action plans, including eliminating structural barriers to gender equality and preventing violent extremism, and civil society engagement in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of such plans.

71. Transforming the international, regional and national commitments set out in resolutions on women and peace and security into local action can further ensure that local needs and priorities inform national, regional and global policy development. Currently, 15 countries are implementing the localization programme

[47] Afghanistan, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Canada, the Central African Republic, Chile, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, the Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Iceland, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Lithuania, Mali, Montenegro, Nepal, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Paraguay, the Philippines, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Sudan, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Uganda, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, the State of Palestine and Kosovo.

[48] Those of Italy, Kenya, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Sweden, Tajikistan and the United Kingdom.

facilitated by the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders.[49] Moreover, national policies designed to promote gender equality in foreign policy and international cooperation, such as the adoption by Sweden and Canada, respectively, of a feminist foreign policy and a feminist foreign assistance policy, further demonstrate leadership and a commitment to address the root causes of gender inequality.

72. I welcome the use of human rights monitoring and reporting mechanisms to address Member State accountability for violations of women's human rights, including in conflict and post-conflict settings. In 2016, the special procedures mechanisms of the Human Rights Council sent a total of 526 communications. Of those, 79 were sent to conflict and post-conflict countries,[50] with 5 pertaining to women's rights violations. The communications regarding rights violations included allegations of killings, sexual violence, harassment and threats against women human rights defenders and judges, denial of food, politically motivated prosecutions and abductions of women and girls for sexual exploitation.

73. In 2016, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women continued to engage States regarding the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda and its general recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations. Also in 2016, three of the four concluding observations addressed to conflict and post-conflict countries referenced both the agenda and general recommendation No. 30, the same percentage as in 2015.[51] The Committee's concluding observations for 10 non-conflict countries in 2016 referenced the women and peace and security agenda.[52] In 2017, the Committee adopted general recommendation No. 35 on gender-based violence against women (CEDAW/C/GC/35), updating general recommendation No. 19, which draws an explicit link between gender, discrimination and conflict-related violence against women. I welcome the Arria formula meeting convened by Spain and Uruguay on 5 December 2016, which brought together members of the Committee and the Security Council to discuss the linkages between human rights and the women and peace and security agenda, in which the Committee was urged to recommend concrete actions to Member States for the implementation of women's human rights in conflict prevention and in conflict and post-conflict situations, including recommendations to non-conflict countries regarding extraterritorial obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. I encourage Member States to use the universal periodic review as an opportunity to enhance accountability for women's human rights obligations and commitments to the women and peace and security agenda.

[49] Armenia, Burundi, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Georgia, Kenya, Nepal, Liberia, the Philippines, the Republic of Moldova, Sierra Leone, Serbia, South Sudan, Uganda and Ukraine.

[50] See footnote 40 for an explanation of conflict and post-conflict countries considered in the present report. Communications were sent to Afghanistan, Burundi, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Guatemala, Guinea, Haiti, Iraq, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Liberia, Mali, Myanmar, Somalia, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine, Yemen and the State of Palestine.

[51] Burundi (CEDAW/C/BDI/CO/5-6), Mali (CEDAW/C/MLI/CO/6-7), and Myanmar (CEDAW/C/MMR/CO/4-5). Haiti was also considered by the Committee, but without reference to women, peace and security (CEDAW/C/HTI/CO/8-9). See footnote 40 for an explanation of conflict and post-conflict countries considered in the present report.

[52] Armenia (CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/5-6), Canada (CEDAW/C/CAN/CO/8-9), Estonia (CEDAW/C/EST/CO/5-6), Germany (CEDAW/C/DEU/CO/7-8), Ireland (CEDAW/C/IRL/CO/6-7), Jordan (CEDAW/C/JOR/CO/6), the Netherlands (CEDAW/C/NLD/CO/6), the Philippines (CEDAW/C/PHL/CO/7-8), Rwanda (CEDAW/C/RWA/CO/7-9) and Turkey (CEDAW/C/TUR/CO/7).

74. In 2016, four conflict and post-conflict countries underwent the universal periodic review[53] and engaged on issues relating to women and peace and security, including sexual violence, women's political participation and the adoption of national action plans. In total, 10 of the 14 countries reviewed in 2016 received questions, comments, and recommendations to address legacies of conflict or violence through the women and peace and security agenda.[54]

75. National human rights institutions are also a critical link in the chain of accountability for women human rights violations and contribute to the prevention of human rights violations and conflict altogether. As at 31 July 2017, of the 31 countries and territories reviewed for the present report, 17 had national human rights institutions accredited with A or B status and two had an ombudsperson institution. This is an increase of one institution and one ombudsperson over the past year. Nine of those bodies have specific units, departments or committees dealing with issues relating to women's rights and gender equality.

Regional efforts to enhance implementation

76. At a time when the causes and effects of conflict regularly spill across borders, regional efforts for the coordinated implementation of commitments to women and peace and security are increasingly important, and I welcome opportunities for enhanced collaboration in this regard. As at 31 August 2017, 10 regional organizations had adopted dedicated implementation frameworks,[55] including regional action plans, on women and peace and security, with one new plan adopted in 2017 by the Southern African Development Community. Regional organizations provide important platforms for increased cooperation. For instance, in 2017 the African Union Commission and UN-Women, with support from Germany, launched the African Women Leaders Network, bringing together approximately 80 participants from across Africa to enhance women's leadership for a more sustainable, inclusive and peaceful continent.

77. The data available on women's representation and leadership in regional organizations indicate signs of stagnation. As at December 2016, 27 per cent of all senior posts — at Headquarters and in the field combined — in reporting organizations were occupied by women, only a slight increase over the 25 per cent reported for 2015, with mixed results across organizations. I encourage all regional organizations to enhance efforts to increase the representation of women in leadership positions within and outside their organizations.

Actions by the United Nations

78. I recognize that the United Nations must do more internally to advance the women and peace and security agenda, moving forward with efficiency, accountability and a renewed commitment to gender equality and women's representation. Currently, reporting demonstrates uneven progress in several areas, including gender parity and architecture and resource tracking and allocation for gender equality. Entities with strong specific gender policies and plans in place consistently outperform others (see, e.g., E/2017/57 and E/2017/57/Corr.1). I am

[53] Haiti, Somalia, South Sudan and the Syrian Arab Republic.

[54] Haiti, Mozambique, the Niger, Papua New Guinea, the Republic of Moldova, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, the Sudan, Swaziland, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste and Uganda.

[55] The African Union, the Economic Community of West African States, the European Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, the League of Arab States, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Pacific Islands Forum, and the Southern African Development Community.

pleased that several new initiatives already show signs of progress. I intend to introduce system-wide efforts to align and strengthen processes for the collection and analysis of gender statistics and data disaggregation to help inform policymaking and translate into planning, programming and reporting.

Representation

79. Achieving gender parity is one of the vital steps towards the realization of a United Nations where gender equality is at the foundation of its work, where operational effectiveness is enhanced and where our own standards are predicated on gender balance. I am personally committed to implementing the concrete measures outlined in my system-wide strategy for gender parity. Gender balance, including the valuing of diverse experience, must guide the composition of panels, fact-finding and assessment missions and other time-bound activities.

80. As at 31 December 2016, women made up 23 per cent of all senior-level (P-5 to Under-Secretary-General) staff in peace operations led by the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. However, only 13 per cent of Under-Secretaries-General were women, with even lower representation among special envoys. Of all active peace operations, 23 per cent were headed by women, compared with 25 per cent in both 2015 and 2014, and 18 per cent in 2010. In terms of deputy heads, the proportion of women stood at 35 per cent, an increase from 18 per cent in 2015, 24 per cent in 2014 and 15 per cent in 2010. Of the 27 resident coordinators serving in conflict and post-conflict countries at the end of 2016, 9 (33 per cent) were women, a slight increase from 29 per cent in 2015. Beyond peace operations, the proportion of Professional posts occupied by women in conflict and post-conflict duty stations remained below 50 per cent in all entities that reported data for 2016 except UN-Women, where women held 64 per cent of such posts and 75 per cent of senior-level posts. The goal should be equal levels of representation across the board.

Expertise

81. I recognize the continued need for determined implementation of the United Nations gender architecture, as well as the importance of gender advisers and women protection advisers. Dedicated technical expertise translates into normative commitments and concrete actions through strategic planning, analysis, budgeting and programme design and implementation — all critical considerations for budget negotiations taking place in the Fifth Committee for the integration of women and peace and security as a cross-cutting issue, as called for in Security Council resolutions 2122 (2013) and 2242 (2015). I am concerned that the drive for cost-effectiveness in peace operations too often leads to decreased financial support for gender equality and women and peace and security capacity, including cuts in dedicated gender posts and reduction of their seniority levels, as seen in MINUSCA, UNMIL and the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti. I have therefore asked all relevant departments of the Secretariat, including the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Political Affairs, to undertake an analysis of their institutional capacity for gender mainstreaming and present a plan for strengthening it.

82. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support have a dedicated workforce of 70 gender experts and a gender focal point mechanism in peacekeeping operations and Headquarters. As at 31 December 2016, 8 of 16 peacekeeping missions had gender units led by gender advisers[56] reporting

[56] UNAMID, United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, UNMIL, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, MINUSCA, MINUSMA, MONUSCO and MINUSTAH.

to my Special Representative or Head of Mission, and 2 had gender focal points.[57] The Senior Gender Adviser post in MINUSMA, however, remains unfilled.

83. In 2016, there were 23 full-time gender advisers deployed to 8 of the 12 field-based missions led by the Department of Political Affairs, an increase from 6 out of 13 missions in 2015.[58] In addition, in 2016, two gender advisers served as part of the offices of special envoys of the Secretary-General.[59] There was a substantial increase in the overall number of gender focal points across special political missions, from 39 in 2015 to 50 in 2016.

84. I welcome efforts by both Departments to increase the visibility and responsibility of gender advisers and units within peace operations and at Headquarters, including by locating senior gender advisers in the offices of my Special Representatives. The responsibility for implementing the women and peace and security agenda in missions lies primarily with the heads of mission, but the presence of gender advisers should support gender mainstreaming in the work of all mission staff to enable more gender-responsive United Nations peacekeeping operations and special political missions. We need to continue our efforts to implement resolution 2242 (2015) to enhance cooperation among the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department of Political Affairs and UN-Women, including by ensuring that they provide field-based gender advisers and other mission officials with full policy, substantive and technical support for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and successive resolutions, making full use of respective comparative advantages.

85. In 2016, 20 international and 5 national women's protection advisers were deployed to peace operations in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Mali, Somalia, Sudan (Darfur) and South Sudan.[60] However, as at 30 September, 10 of 27 posts for women's protection advisers remained vacant, including those in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan; the post for Darfur has been cut.

86. In addition to the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, many other United Nations entities with a presence in conflict and post-conflict settings provide expertise on women and peace and security. For example, as at 31 December 2016, UN-Women had a country presence in 25 conflict and post-conflict countries and was implementing peace, security and humanitarian activities in 58 countries. Of the UNDP offices in such settings, 77 per cent have gender focal teams led by a senior manager, and the World Food Programme has 177 gender focal points. In 2016, 71 of the 131 United Nations country teams (54 per cent) had inter-agency working or theme groups with a focus on gender. Of those, 21 out of 28 country teams (75 per cent) active in conflict and

[57] The United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo and the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus.

[58] The United Nations Support Mission in Libya, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia, the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau, the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq and the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon.

[59] Namely, the Offices of the Special Envoys for the Great Lakes region and for Syria. As at 30 September 2017, the Office of the Special Envoy for Yemen had also recruited two gender advisers. Of the 25 gender advisers across field-based missions led by the Department of Political Affairs (23) and offices of special envoys (2), three are at the D-1 or P-5 level and six are at the P-4 level.

[60] In accordance with A/70/357, they carry out their responsibilities, including the establishment of and coordination on monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements on conflict-related sexual violence, from within human rights components or in cooperation with them.

post-conflict settings had such groups, an increase from 64 per cent in 2015. With proper leadership support from all country team entities, clear mandates, dedicated coordination capacity, resources and active participation by its members, those groups can serve as an important means for promoting coherence and providing strategic advice to country teams and technical support to host Governments.

Work of the Security Council

87. In 2016, there were several important innovations in the work of the Security Council in the area of women and peace and security: the convening of an informal group of experts, the inclusion of a woman civil society representative in a country-specific briefing[61] and the adoption of the first-ever resolutions devoted solely to addressing sexual exploitation and abuse (2272 (2016)) and human trafficking and sexual violence and their intersection with violent extremism (2331 (2016)).

88. In its resolution 2242 (2015), the Security Council expressed its intention to convene meetings of relevant Council experts as part of an informal expert group on women and peace and security to facilitate a more systematic approach to its work in this area and enable greater oversight and coordination of implementation efforts (see S/2016/1106). With Spain and the United Kingdom as co-chairs and UN-Women as its secretariat, the informal expert group convened nine meetings in its inaugural year, on Afghanistan,[62] the Central African Republic,[63] Iraq,[64] Mali[65] and a thematic update on sexual violence in conflict by women protection advisers from several missions.[66] In each meeting, senior peace operation and country team leadership briefed Council experts on women and peace and security concerns and discussed potential follow-up actions by the United Nations and the Council. The sharper focus and timeliness of the information and analysis have already had an impact. For example, following an informal expert group briefing on Yemen, the Council issued a presidential statement that included a recommendation from the group calling upon the parties to ensure at least 30 per cent representation of women in peace negotiations and calling upon the United Nations to report regularly on consultations with women leaders and women's organizations in line with resolution 2122 (2013) (S/PRST/2017/7). I extend my gratitude to the current co-chairs, Sweden and Uruguay, for consolidating and expanding the programme of work of the informal expert group.

89. In 2016, 38 of 77 resolutions adopted by the Security Council (49.4 per cent) referenced women and peace and security, and of the 19 presidential statements issued, 11 (57.9 per cent) included such references. The percentage of resolutions referencing women and peace and security has declined, from 64 per cent in 2015, 60.3 per cent in 2014 and 76.5 per cent in 2013. However, a study of resolutions that focused narrowly on mandate renewals for 25 country situations, 10 thematic issues and counter-terrorism found that 74 per cent of those resolutions included gender-related language and that the quality and specificity of such references had improved in general across all situations.[67]

90. It is crucial for the Security Council to maintain its focus on the women and peace and security agenda for all country-specific situations and themes. Yet,

[61] See S/PV.7824.
[62] See S/2016/673, S/2016/1059.
[63] See S/2016/672, S/2016/1105.
[64] See S/2016/683, S/2016/1104.
[65] See S/2016/682, S/2016/1103.
[66] See S/2016/1107.
[67] See Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, "Mapping women, peace and security in the UN Security Council: 2016", 13 June 2017. Available from www.womenpeacesecurity.org/resource/mapping-women-peace-and-security-in-the-un-security-council-2016/.

inconsistencies remain and I note that gender equality and women and peace and security issues continue to be neglected in emerging or deteriorating crises or when discussing counter-terrorism or the deployment of troops. Fewer than 20 per cent of all adopted resolutions contained references to the importance of and the need to ensure freedom for civil society, women's groups and women human rights defenders.[68]

91. In 2016, 154 reports were submitted or transmitted by the Secretary-General to the Security Council. All 38 periodic reports on peacekeeping operations and all 26 periodic reports on special political missions contained references to women and peace and security. While analysis shows some improvement,[69] I call upon my Special Representatives and principals of United Nations entities to continue their efforts to enhance the quality of gender and conflict analysis in their reporting to the Council, including in sections on political developments and conflict dynamics. This includes improved disaggregation of data and targeted efforts to bring in the perspectives of women peacebuilders.

92. Greater attention to women and peace and security should also be evident in the work of the Security Council's subsidiary bodies. As at 30 September 2017, 7[70] (53 per cent) of 13 sanctions regimes contained sexual and gender-based violence as part of their designation criteria. In its resolution 2242 (2015), the Council committed to ensuring that the relevant expert groups for sanctions committees had the necessary gender expertise. This expertise is represented in six sanctions regimes by international humanitarian law experts, while two sanctions regimes, for Libya and for Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities, have no such expertise. The public sanctions monitoring reports contain few references to women and peace and security issues.[71] The Secretariat is currently developing a training module for experts on those issues. It is important that subsidiary bodies be mandated and have the capacity to integrate women and peace and security considerations within its analysis, reporting and decisions. I urge Council members to give priority and visibility to the rights of women in the designation criteria of sanctions regimes and consider adopting thematic sanctions regimes to address such global threats as sexual and gender-based violence in conflict, human trafficking, targeted abductions and killings of women and girls and gross violations of women's rights.

93. I reiterate the importance of elevating the visibility of women and peace and security during all visiting missions of the Security Council. In 2016, the Council undertook five field missions: to Burundi and Ethiopia in January; to Mali, Guinea-Bissau and Senegal in March; to Somalia, Kenya and Egypt in May; to South Sudan and Ethiopia in September; and to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Angola in November. Four[72] of five terms of reference of the missions and three[73] of four of the briefings following the missions contained references to women and peace and security.

94. In 2016, women's civil society representatives briefed the Security Council during three open debates on women and peace and security: in March on the role of

[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid.
[70] These are the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida sanctions regime.
[71] See S/2017/326. Some references were also included in S/2016/73 (Yemen), S/2017/639 (Central African Republic), S/2016/805 (Sudan), and S/2017/22 (Sudan).
[72] See S/2016/215, S/2016/456, S/2016/757, S/2016/948, but not S/2016/55.
[73] See S/PV.7647, S/PV.7696, S/PV.7819, but not S/PV.7615. There was no Security Council meeting on the mission to South Sudan and Ethiopia.

women in conflict prevention and resolution in Africa;[74] in June on human trafficking and conflict-related sexual violence;[75] and in October on the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.[76] I welcome the facilitating role the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security plays in this process to ensure that civil society speakers are selected by civil society. In 2016, the Council invited, for the first time, a woman civil society representative to address it in a country-specific meeting on Liberia.[77] In the following months, six more women civil society representatives and one representative of an independent national human rights institution briefed the Council on country situations.[78] I urge Council members to build on this good practice and continue to invite women from civil society organizations to country-specific meetings to bring in more diverse perspectives and analysis of needs, priorities and solutions.

95. I encourage the Security Council to request regular briefings from the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of UN-Women and my Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, including on findings from relevant field missions, and to make greater use of the gender-related findings of commissions of inquiry supported by OHCHR and of the information and analysis generated by the meetings of the informal expert group and human rights treaty bodies, including the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

96. I call upon members of the Security Council to systematically use information on women and peace and security in deliberations and negotiations and to address specific questions to field leadership during all consultations. I urge the Council to ensure that all mission mandates reflect a stronger emphasis on women and peace and security and that sufficient resources and expertise are provided to facilitate the consistent delivery and monitoring of progress.

Financing the women and peace and security agenda

97. Conflict and related emergencies unravel years of developmental progress, disproportionately affecting women and compounding existing inequalities. Moreover, gender equality programming and expertise are often among the first to face budget cuts, and many entities still lack dedicated systems for measuring funding devoted to gender equality. There remains a dire need to reprioritize spending patterns, effectively coordinate funding instruments and explore innovative forms of flexible financing.

98. Overall, the use of gender markers for the programmatic work of United Nations entities operating in conflict and post-conflict settings has grown. The Peacebuilding Fund again exceeded the minimum 15 per cent target in 2016 and allocated 19.2 per cent of funds to gender equality and women's empowerment as a principal objective — attributable in part to improved gender mainstreaming and the innovative Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative. The Peacebuilding Fund, for the first time, directly supported civil society organizations, thereby bolstering partnerships and increasing constituencies for gender-sensitive and sustainable peace. The Peacebuilding Fund business plan (2017-2019) builds on those successes and raises the Fund's target from 15 to 30 per cent for allocations related to gender equality.

[74] See S/PV.7658.
[75] See S/PV.7704.
[76] See S/PV.7793.
[77] Liberia (S/PV.7824).
[78] Afghanistan (S/PV.7896), Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/PV.7903), Lake Chad Basin (S/PV.7861), Somalia (S/PV.7873), South Sudan (S/PV.7906), and Yemen (S/PV.7954).

99. In the case of UNDP, allocations to projects with gender equality as a principal objective stood at only 4.5 per cent, as in 2015, 2014 and 2013, which remains lower than the 6 per cent achieved in 2012. However, when taking into account UNDP projects with gender as a significant cross-cutting dimension, the figure is 46 per cent, which is above the 31 per cent observed the previous year. While UNHCR currently does not implement a tracking system, an analysis of information available through its results-based-management system indicates that approximately 11 per cent of the total operating budget for 2016 was allocated to activities having gender as a significant objective.[79] In 2016, up to 83 per cent of the humanitarian expenditure of UNICEF contributed to improving gender equality. UN-Women allocations to promote gender equality in peace, security and humanitarian action continued to increase in response to growing needs, reaching $71.42 million in 2016, of which $58.85 million went to peace and security programming and $12.57 million to humanitarian interventions.

100. The share of sector-allocable official development assistance (ODA) supporting gender equality must also be increased. In 2015, 19.4 per cent of all sector-allocable ODA was allocated to conflict and post-conflict countries, of which 40 per cent targeted gender equality. Only 5 per cent of the gender-focused sector-allocable ODA allocated to those countries was marked as having a principal focus. I welcome the commitment of Canada to ensuring that 15 per cent of all bilateral international development assistance will be targeted specifically for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls by 2021/22 and encourage all Member States to set similar targets for the financing of gender equality. I welcome the new Spotlight Initiative, a joint effort of the European Union and the United Nations, which will invest €500 million to eliminate violence against women and girls, and encourage others to support that effort.

101. Political commitments can translate into increased funding allocations from pooled financing mechanisms and, most importantly, increased programming resources for women and peace and security. The women's peace and humanitarian fund, established after the 2015 high-level review, is an important mechanism with which to address funding gaps for women peacebuilders and the only dedicated mechanism for providing support to women and peace and security efforts. To date, the fund has supported women's organizations in Burundi, Colombia, Jordan and the Solomon Islands and the Pacific. Despite notable results, resource constraints have limited country access to the fund, with 19 of the 23 countries eligible for support yet to receive funding.

102. I welcome other trust funds in contexts affected by conflict that are integrating good practices on gender mainstreaming. In the countries under consideration in the present report, 25 multi-partner trust funds have been established since 2010. Almost all (23 out of 25) mention gender in their core documents. However, only three, the funds on Afghanistan, Colombia and Somalia, mention use of a gender marker. The international security and stabilization support strategy trust fund in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the joint peace fund in Myanmar are both developing systems to ensure gender marking and the allocation of sufficient resources to gender equality programming.

103. I call upon Member States to increase their funding for women and peace and security, including through domestic budget allocations, more gender-focused aid in conflict and post-conflict settings, direct support to civil society and the United Nations system and increased contributions to special funds, such as the women's peace and humanitarian fund, the United Nations trust fund in support of actions to eliminate violence against women, the United Nations fund for gender equality and

[79] This covers all UNHCR operations, not just those operating in conflict and post-conflict settings.

the multi-partner trust fund of United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict and the Spotlight Initiative. Given the Peacebuilding Fund's track record in financing and driving innovation with regard to gender-responsive peacebuilding and sustaining peace, I call upon all donors to the Fund to maintain and increase their contributions.

104. I call upon all multi-partner trust funds in conflict-affected and fragile settings, building on the good practices noted above, to adopt and implement my target of allocating a minimum of 15 per cent of all funding to gender equality and women's empowerment as a principal objective. Resource tracking must be accompanied by improved monitoring to ensure that increased funding for programmatic activities translates into better results for women and girls. I encourage donor countries and development banks to use targets, such as 15 per cent, to direct adequate financing towards gender equality, including targeted funding with respect to the women and peace and security agenda.

III. Concluding observations and recommendations

105. Each day that passes without a deepened resolve to prevent and cease conflict compounds the human suffering and environmental degradation described in the present report. Yet, the road to sustainable peace, the reinstatement of the rule of law, renewed public trust and strong guarantees of fundamental human rights is often long and daunting. While each context necessitates unique and creative solutions, all require the equal and meaningful participation and leadership of women, which has a demonstrated catalytic impact on the sustainability and effectiveness of peace processes, economic development and social prosperity.

106. Since 2000, the women and peace and security agenda has gained significant normative strength. Each pillar has been further operationalized for action with the three peace and security reviews of 2015, the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 20-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and through dedicated regional and national policy frameworks and action plans. The Security Council has provided strong direction through its eight resolutions on women and peace and security and has mandated targeted action in country-specific and thematic resolutions, including for emerging areas. Human rights treaty bodies are also integrating the agenda into its monitoring. The frameworks and tools for implementation are in place. At this stage there is a need to shift from the ad hoc inclusion of women and peace and security and small-scale, project-based initiatives towards ensuring that women and peace and security is part and parcel of systemic change, including large-scale, transformative programmes and approaches to preventing conflict and sustaining peace.

107. Throughout the present report, I have highlighted my own commitments to implement the women and peace and security agenda, including by placing gender at the centre of my prevention platform and surge in diplomacy. My support for a transformative organizational shift towards a coordinated, robust and holistic approach to prevention includes commitments for mediation, for ending sexual exploitation and abuse and for gender parity across the Organization and at the most senior levels, including among heads and deputy heads of mission and special envoys. I commit to further addressing those areas where the United Nations is furthest behind in the representation and meaningful participation of women, including, for example, peacekeeping, where I have requested a dedicated strategy from the United Nations in consultation with troop-contributing countries to meet our outstanding targets.

108. High-quality gender and conflict analysis that relies on data that is disaggregated by gender, age and other relevant criteria must be included in all conflict prevention efforts. After 17 years of implementation, however, gaps in the availability of meaningful data remain, and gender and conflict analysis is inconsistently utilized. Ongoing global efforts to gather data and populate key indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals and improve the disaggregation of data by gender, age and other variables must be accelerated. Such efforts will contribute to improved understanding of impacts and outcomes, as well as the identification of critical gaps. I strongly encourage Member States, with the support of United Nations and other actors, to build measurement and evaluation capacity to ensure women's meaningful leadership and participation across the areas covered in the present report, including, for example, in mediation, peace processes, peacekeeping forces and governance; the design and development of humanitarian action and economic recovery; and other areas. I further encourage Member States to monitor gender equality indicators at the national level. These are strong indicators of resilience, and a sudden downward shift in women's rights is highly correlated with greater risk of conflict.

109. Improving women's access to meaningful leadership and participation in peace efforts begins with strengthened collaboration with civil society organizations, especially women-led organizations, and women peacebuilders. Women's peace activists have not only played an essential role in the creation of the agenda, but continue to carry the weight of implementation and remain the foremost experts in preventing conflict and sustaining peace. However, as highlighted in the present report, violence against women's human rights defenders persists, space continues to shrink for civil society in many parts of the world and limited opportunities for direct financial and technical support to civil society organizations remain the norm.

110. Member States and United Nations entities must invest in locally driven solutions and increase collaboration, funding and direct support to civil society organizations, including local women's organizations. Implementation cannot succeed without meaningful financial investment, targeting areas where evidence demonstrates impact. As highlighted throughout the report, the persistent funding gaps highlighted in Security Council resolution 2242 (2015) remain and, in some areas, have continued to widen, despite clear evidence that gender equality and women's empowerment leads to peaceful, just and inclusive societies. All commitments to implement the women and peace and security agenda, including national action plans and existing funding instruments, for example, cannot be effective without the necessary resources.

111. I call upon Member States to exercise global leadership and greater political will by championing the women and peace and security agenda in policies at home and abroad, fully translating symbolic commitments into practice. Gender equality and women's empowerment are prerequisites for preventing conflict, a powerful tool for sustaining peace and essential to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goals 5 and 16. To address the root causes of gender-based violence and inequality, we must end impunity and guarantee the full range of human rights, including economic, social and cultural rights, for all women, regardless of age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, ethnicity, religion and political affiliation. On women and peace and security, I expect the United Nations to lead and inspire by example.